FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

Volume XX, Number 4, August 1969

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Our purpose: To promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God, regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor:

This letter was inspired by Dr. Merchant's LETTER TO THE EDITOR in FIP's June issue, 1969. The doctor's ideas encompassed healing prayer for the universe with the help of FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER. He wrote, "Perhaps we could develop a literature that would generate healing power."

The kindly doctor will be glad to know that this is just what our FIP accomplishes going all around the world with God's prayered actions. Through our blessed FIP you will never know how many countless blue—and sick, discouraged—old friends I cheer up with FIP's writings. Do you want to hear how one copy can do this? I will tell you.

I clip, I type poems, I telephone, and mail all the inspiring articles I am certain some friend of mine will be delighted to learn about. First, I pray over the writing. Their drooping spirits are lifted heavenward, dear Editor, through enjoying FIP's blessed articles our good contributors have sent in. So my friends develop (they write me) a healthier attitude towards life. With their new, personal, happier thoughts they recover from their unbalanced thinking, and are made whole to enjoy God's beautiful world: renewed. Dear Editor, the deep goodness of FIP's spiritual literature takes root within the hearts of my friends. Innumerable sad friends are sustained through bedridden hours by these extracts I have typed and sent them to keep well, and recover their smiling.

Dr. Merchant's letter of ideas for "healing through prayer" takes over, and our FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER truly becomes a great fellowship all over God's world, *to heal!* Through their more positive newer attitude of mind, creating health in happiness of soul and body, a fresh "spiritual apprehension" does arise and their sickness disappear. Would that I could share their grateful letters, dear Editor, so that you, too, might know this miracle of FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER's healing power, yes, in *deed.*

Faithfully,
Alice Richmond

EDITORIAL

As I write this column (on the morning of 17 July), U. S. astronauts Neil A. Armstrong, Michael Collins, and Edwin E. Aldrin, Jr. have left the earth and are soaring in that still largely unknown medium which former President John F. Kennedy challenged us to sail upon, space. *Per aspera ad astra.* (But we'll settle for the moon!)

These three men are our representatives for an age-old dream—a quest which, however much we may question economically or politically, or resist as another form of vanity, or put down altogether as a gross distortion of earth-sore priorities, can hardly fail to enlist that imaginative part of our spirit which wants aspirations given substance and human experience stretched.

Are we trying to reach the moon as George Leigh-Mallory attempted to climb Mt. Everest, *because it is there?* Perhaps. That Leigh-Mallory failed, that the moon mission may fail reminds us of the personal tragedy that is possible, yet does not cease to inspire our visions of the universal in the scrims of existence that they leave.

It may not be important, in the final scheme of things, that man lands on the moon or the planets or in other galaxies or, indeed, with some higher categorical imperative jumps over the ends of the universe. What is important is the symbol, the most visible kind of external event to complement our great, and sometimes equally dangerous, voyage of inner discovery—an "answer" to our prayers for attempting to become ever more heavenward.

To say that this particular undertaking is hazardous may be the understatement of the century (thus far). To say that it is necessary, irresistible, and inevitable is the ordination of the life impulse *to know*, to realize what is potentially the lot of every human being, the extension of the human dimension to infinity—faith. Not just an *act* of faith, but faith itself, faith in the sense of the prayer of Rabbi Pinhas of Korez/Hasid:

The people think that they pray before God. But it is not so. For the prayer itself is the essence of the Godhead.

God be with them, then, and with us.

—J. W.

SECOND THOUGHTS ON THE RELIGIOUS REVIVAL

Paul Hourihan

In this postwar period widespread publicity has been given to evident signs of a religious revival taking place in America, and we are thinking now especially of the work of evangelists and the immense throngs that come to hear them. No one can deny that there are signs on all sides reflecting a great dissatisfaction with the deadening values of materialism and a hunger for something higher and more ennobling in life. Perhaps there has never been an age since the Reformation when people were so receptive to religious truth as ours. The very existence of this publication may be regarded in this light, for FELLOWSHIP IN

PRAYER could never have appeared in any age except the present one.

Religious people may with reason be gratified at this trend and feel that, from a religious standpoint alone, this is an incomparably exciting period in which to live. We concur in this mood. But we must disagree with some of the basic assumptions that have mobilized all these hopes.

First of all, we wonder whether the emotional atmosphere generated by evangelists in crowded arenas is the proper setting to begin a spiritual life, and whether the "decisions for Christ" publicly declared on such occasions are in fact anything more than an emotional response to mere oratory. No prophet or great spiritual leader has ever depended upon the arts of the orator to win people to religion. All of them without exception have drawn people by their saintliness, their character, and the example of their lives. There is indeed, as most of us discover eventually, no other way to make a lasting impression on the human mind. Evangelism (and its practictioners) excites people, and gives them a momentary conviction of religious awakening, but it has been found that such sudden conversions, if we may call them such, have no substance and do not last.

In this sense, evangelism, in the light of its consequences, may be regarded as deception, for it leads people to believe that religious conversion and the life they are told will open up for them, will be an easy path to read. Those now living that life know that such is far from the case. Though it is a life foreordained for all of us, it is a life of struggle, of renunciation, of constant battle with ourselves.

To embark on such a life is a step to be taken with the utmost solemnity, and the "decision" to take it must be weighed in the silence of the individual's heart, when he is more alone than at any other time. It is something to be done least of all in a crowd, when our senses are temporarily aroused, and our intellect and

power of discrimination are clouded.

An equally serious consideration is the dogmatic approach to religion that all evangelists, at this late date in history, still rely upon. They declare that only their way is the true way, only the doctrines they preach are truth, and thus perpetuate a method of religious teaching which, in this century, is growing more and more archaic to vast numbers of seeking, uncommitted people. The appeal to dogma and tradition can never again be successful in persuading people to turn to religion when everything else has failed them. We believe it has had its day and that history is telling us this in an unmistakable manner. Some other kind of religious orientation, some quite different, still evolving approach to the whole spiritual life, must be sought and discovered to meet the needs of people in this century and in the generations that follow us. If dogma and traditionalism were still suitable to modern man there would have been no need for the great number of experimental religious groups that have recently come to birth in America. Their existence is a convincing sign that too much has been found wanting in the old way of approaching religion.

A religious revival—let us say a spiritual revival—is a good and necessary thing, but we do not believe it can be accomplished by mass meetings, emotionalism, and oratory. It will depend primarily on the courage and strength of people already entered upon the spiritual life, by whose example and words and prayers others will be drawn to follow them irresistibly. That is why we always emphasize the necessity of prayer and meditation practiced by the individual, rather than a reliance upon the authority of scriptures or church doctrines. We have seen too many great people produced outside the limits of any dogma, or any church for that matter, to be persuaded any longer that a belief in dogmas and doctrines is the sole, or even the principal, way to salvation and divine enlightenment.

Reprinted from the 10th Anniversary Issue of FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER December 1960. Mr. Hourihan was then Editor.

CYCLE

Grace Barker Wilson

I shall not falter when night
Closes
So much have I had
Of joy,
Love,
Service.
Perhaps I should be glad to rest
A little while
Then begin
Again,
In some other sphere.

EARTH-WORN

Eva Joy Heitmeyer

My soul
Longs for its wings.
Loose me and let me go.
I have outgrown this frail, weak house
Of clay.

—Reprinted by permission
from POETRY PREVUE

I MUST COME BACK

Emily Sargent Councilman

When you said just now, "If you
should die, I could never come back
to this place again,
never again. . . ."

O my dear, my dear,
if you die I must come back to the sea,
bringing my emptiness, my unshed tears
and all of my aloneness
to this twilight's hush
beneath the oversounds of rolling surf—
here where we have been a part
of sea and sand and windblown fragrance,
of limitless horizons,
here where we have breathed the consciousness
of our wholeness as one
and captured a world of first raptures together,
each with its after-tenderness.

I know, I know
remembrance will salt the agony of my open wound,
but I will learn to savor it,
await its healing;
for I will be remembering too
the sometimes bringing
of defeats and sorrows here
and finding strength for merging loss
with victory. . . .

Here they will flow for me,
the cleansing tears.

And if, in all this vastness,
this rounded world with darkening dome above me,
I do not find you here to fill
the empty vastness of my earthly
separateness from you; if
at first I hear no music
in the ocean's symphony of sound,
no vibrant stillness
in the twilight's hush,

perhaps
I shall begin to see, though dimly,
the water's ceaseless coming to the shore
and remember
how it mingles with all
waters and touches
other shores.

Pain-illumined sight
will bring me peace, I think,
a washing of peace,
as the sea on the incoming tide
fulfills the empty shore.
And I will know
the essence of our
oneness still remains—
you, forever touching my shore,
I yours,
only seeming to be separate;

and I will know
that time and space
can have no power to bind
in Love's dimension.

Then
until I taste again
the quiet sweetness
of this twilight's pulsing hush
and, fearing no
dark hours yet to come,
take home with me
full overtones of rapture
rolling,
rolling
toward my shore.

Last year Swami Ritajananda, President of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Center at Gretz, France, convened a conference in which participants were invited to explain the teachings given in their religions on the subject of salvation; and the *idea* of salvation in various religions was the theme for the January 1969 issue of VEDANTA, a trimonthly publication of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Center.

It is altogether fitting, as FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER approaches its 20th anniversary, that a project initiated by former Editor Paul Griffith, to survey contemporary religious systems in cross-section, should begin with the talk (originally in French) by Swami Ritajananda himself at this conference, on one of the two great systems of Hindu thought, the Advaita-Vedanta of Samkarāchārya.

Talks by representatives of other religions at this conference will be presented as a series in succeeding issues with the hope that, as Swami Ritajananda says, "You will find evidence of the religious thought of our time and a sign of the good will and understanding which animated these meetings."

THE IDEA OF SALVATION ACCORDING TO SAMKARĀCHĀRYA

Swami Ritajananda

May we meditate on this resplendent Being who has given birth to the entire universe!

May He direct our intelligence toward the Light!

Sri Samkarāchārya begins his commentaries on the MĀNDUKYA UPANISHAD with a prayer:

"I prostrate myself before BRAHMAN!

"In the waking state, it is He who creates the experience of all gross objects by penetrating the entire universe with the omnipresent rays of His unalterable consciousness which embraces the multiplicity of objects, movable and immovable.

"In the dream state, it is He who absorbs in a certain manner that which thus creates, within Himself, the experience of the multiplicity of objects which desire produces and to which mentality lends existence. In the deep-sleep state, it is He who enjoys felicity and who causes us, by virtue of 'Mâyâ,' to taste of this felicity.

"It is He again who, in terms of 'Mâyâ,' is designated as the fourth state, TURĪYA, which is the Supreme, the Immortal, the Immutable!

"May this TURĪYA, after being identified, by virtue of 'Māyā,' with the totality of the universe—(this Turīya) which causes, in the waking state, by means of ignorance and attachment, the experience of multiple objects of gross enjoyment; which, in the dream state, enlightened by Its light alone, causes then the experience of objects of subtle enjoyment, to which Its internal sense lends existence; which finally, in the deep-sleep state, withdrawing into Itself all objects subtle and gross, frees Itself from all distinction, all differentiation—may this TURĪYA, forever exempt from attributes, accord us Its protection!"

Such is the prayer of Sri Samkarāchārya.

* * *

Salvation is not a new subject. It has been studied in the great religions, and, at the beginning of our history, in the most ancient beliefs, we find a notion of deliverance, that is to say, of changing from one state to another.

In Christianity, salvation signifies deliverance of the soul from sin and its entrance into heaven, prepared by Christ, there to be in eternal felicity. All religions that have a theology explain salvation as deliverance from evil and misery. Salvation brings happiness, well-being, wisdom. In this case, it does not concern the good of this world but always of a higher spiritual level.

Salvation is individual sanctity. It is the ideal of our life.

In India there are four forms of religious ideal, and for all, "Moksha" is salvation, liberation. The faithful are often very fervent; they have faith in a divine ideal which is sometimes called a Principle, sometimes God. All spiritual life is directed toward the ideal and God can sanctify the individual soul.

On the other hand, certain sects explain salvation as a "post-mortem" state in which those who have lived according to the rules of their religion will be, in paradise, near the Lord; it is then, for them, a recompense of their good conduct, according to the teachings of their Prophet.

* * *

We shall now study the idea of salvation according to the *Advaïta-Vedanta* of Samkarāchārya, with the One without a second, in which the notion of deliverance speaks neither of heaven nor of the Lord. It is quite a different idea.

Swami Turiyānanda once said: "When you will listen to Vedanta and pass some time in studying the ideas it presents to you, your vision will change completely. After that there will be no longer anything in the world which can attract you nor hold you in its possession."

We shall try to understand how this can be so. In India "Moksha" or "Mukti," deliverance, is explained in different ways. Hinduism includes several sects; each one of them explains salvation in its way, and this interpretation is not always that of Samkarāchārya.

Thus, we divide all thoughts relative to deliverance into two categories, of which one is belief in God in heaven, the end (objective) of our life; and the other is quite a different thought, an entirely other vision which speaks neither of heaven nor of God; it is the thought of Sri Samkarāchārya, of the Vedanta, of the Buddha.

Will you think this other vision is materialistic because it considers life here below on earth just as it is? That which will come to pass after death is not the important point because

"Moksha" or "Mukti," deliverance, should be realized here, in our lifetime.

This is one of the reasons for the attraction exercised by Vedanta on positive minds. All that it explains about life and the "end" of our life is more comprehensible, more reasonable, and has an immediate value. Instead of searching for what will happen after death, Vedanta teaches what we should realize right here on earth.

In any case, and taking into account the divergencies of ideas, Indian philosophers agree on the notion of "Moksha," a state filled with felicity where man is liberated from all of his miseries.

The philosopher attached to the idea of a Personal God accords a particular importance to the notion of a life of beatitude in the presence of the Lord. This is, in India, the idea of Rāmānujāchārya and other thinkers.

But the non-dualistic philosopher who considers the "One without a second" as the unique Reality, believes that realization of BRAHMAN is salvation.

What is BRAHMAN? *It is absolute Reality*, says Samkarāchārya. The realization of BRAHMAN is deliverance.

We already know some of the *Upanishads;* these sacred texts speak always of BRAHMAN, sole Reality. The individual soul must seek and realize this unique Reality.

Before Samkarāchārya, great philosophers have explained these same very ancient texts. We do not know their names, but we know that Gaudapāda, who was the guru of the guru of Samkarāchārya, commentated the Upanishads. He taught the message of the non-dualistic *Advaïta-Vedanta*. After him, it was Samkarāchārya who

transmitted this great message. He knew how to express his ideas with much clarity in a very precise form. But it was not he who formulated the system of thought of the Advaïta-Vedanta. He himself says constantly, "It is not I who established this particular system of thought; it already existed in India; you find it in the Upanishads."

Each time that Samkarāchārya explains an idea, he founds it on the Upanishads and adds, "Thus says the Upanishad."

Naturally, it was very difficult to argue with Samkarāchārya and to defeat him, for he always had his advocate, the Upanishads, behind him. He had an extraordinary memory and could cite no-matter-what passage of the Scriptures. He passed his very short life entirely consecrated to study. He began to study Vedanta at the age of five or six years; he acquired a mastery of this subject so surprising that he could hold his own with the great scholars; he held discussions with them and gave his message.

A certain number of persons do not accept all that Samkarāchārya believes, particularly his theory of "Māyā." I say "theory" because he himself, in speaking of Māyā, calls it inexplicable: "I see something, but there are no words to express it."

If you are not content with this answer, you will find that Samkarāchārya is not very explicit. Meanwhile, as we know, the difficulty always remains there. On long reflection, we can understand, but our intelligence is not adequate to grasp everything. And if we could accept this limitation, then the problem would become simpler. This depends also on an "experience" that we can realize and which convinces us.

It is necessary to accentuate again that Samkarāchārya accorded great importance to the Veda. He was not against the Veda,

nor against the religion practiced in India. And here is a typically Hindu characteristic.

Before the year 788, the epoch of Samkarāchārya there was the time of the religion of the Veda, called "Mimāmsa." The Veda is a sacred text which teaches the worship of Fire, symbol of the Divine; we were promised the heaven of the "Devas" in supreme felicity. This is the thought of "Mimāmsa."

Then came the time of the Buddhists who did not accept the Vedas and gave a totally rational explanation of existence. Finally, a thousand years later arrived Samkarāchārya.

There is no religion which can maintain for a thousand years the exactitude of the prophetic words, and it is impossible to understand a religion by the life of a people of a certain epoch, because with time a sort of deterioration of ideas is always produced; the faithful do not conserve intact the ideal taught by the Prophet; they arrive little by little at a compromise. This is what had happened when Samkarāchārya saw the Buddhism of his time.

On the other hand, there were still tribes that adored different Divinities. In India, the true Vedic religion did not include all the Divinities worshipped today by the Hindus: Shiva, Kali, Ganesha, and other gods. The ancient cults permitted sacrifices of animals, and even of human beings; the faithful of those times believed thus to obtain the good of all.

The life of Samkarāchārya in such conditions was full of difficulties. He had to contend with several sects, and diverse groups. Once he risked massacre by people who sought a human holocaust to sacrifice to their god.

The philosophy of Samkarāchārya defined in terms as rational as possible the aim of spiritual life. His exposition shows that it

would not be sufficient to consider it solely as a philosophy. It is necessary to understand it by its spirituality and to grasp the rational explanation that he gives. Unfortunately, I cannot expound to you his entire philosophy; we are limiting ourselves to the consideration of his ideas on salvation.

In defining "Moksha" as deliverance from our enslavement, it remains to be understood what this enslavement is. It is that of the Soul resulting from its identification with the multitude of things, agreeable or disagreeable, which surround man and which constitute for him the illusory—that is to say, changing—world. The individual soul, in identifying itself with the things which surround it, says at a certain moment: "Oh, I am very contented, I have great pleasure!" But at another moment it finds itself very discontented, unhappy, desolate: It suffers.

Salvation being deliverance from all miseries, Samkarāchārya says that liberation is realized by intuitive knowledge of Reality, which is the Reality of oneself.

I shall make a brief resume of the essentials of this philosophy:

1) BRAHMAN is the only Reality.

2) All things are illusory (ephemeral).

3) BRAHMAN and the individual soul are identical.

If you can remember these three sentences, you will have all of Samkarāchārya.

* * *

BRAHMAN is the only Reality! It is this same BRAHMAN which is within us as our Atman, or — the soul of our soul. Then

what is this that we see around us? These are things that are not real, but only transitory; they are therefore unreal.

Pay attention here! Truth is Reality.

Samkarāchārya makes clear the distinction. In our habitual life, we see a truth which appears to be real but only for a time. Whereas Reality, according to Advaïta-Vedanta, does not grant the importance of a reality to transitory things.

Then what is this sort of reality which seems to be one thing today and tomorrow will be different? It is important for us to know because Advaïta-Vedanta is based entirely on the sole Reality which never changes.

It is true that, in our ordinary life, we do not habitually see this immutable Reality. Perhaps we shall say that the mountain so exists since many years or many centuries without apparent transformation; but meanwhile it does change, it is not eternal. The entire world is changing everywhere. And, in spite of this, we have within us the belief in something constant because "intuitively" we know it even while seeing that which changes. Behind all changes there is that which is eternal. And even though we do not see it, we are obliged to accept it as the only immutable Reality. It is in this way that Samkarāchārya begins his demonstration, reasonable and logical.

There is also a foundation, that of Intelligence, of which the Upanishads give us a strong idea: If infinite Reality exists eternally without change, BRAHMAN, the Ultimate Truth, is behind all beings. Thus we can grasp It intuitively or understand It with our intelligence. Because Reality is also Intelligence!

Third point: Samkarāchārya says, It is the Witness.

SWAMI RITAJANANDA

Photo courtesy of Miss Ruth
Peter and Mr. Joseph Stanley

It is within us that there is that Witness of all that happens. All things occur and disappear. But in us there is always the subject that abides. This is BRAHMAN the Eternal Witness!

Do not imagine that these are characteristics of BRAHMAN Itself. We may speak of BRAHMAN as that which exists, knows, is the Witness, but this is not a description of BRAHMAN. It is indescribable.

Samkarāchārya explains how we feel suffering by our false identification. On the one hand, we have the possibility of merging into ATMAN-BRAHMAN; on the other, we have the faculty of identifying ourselves with our body; our individual nature, with the world. This is the false identification. Because of the great power of "Māyā," we are drawn toward external, transitory things, and we do not see our true, eternal Self.

"Moksha," deliverance, is attained by the knowledge of the unique Reality, BRAHMAN, within us.

Knowledge causes us to discriminate between the Eternal and the non-eternal, that is, between the Real and the unreal. At another time, I spoke of meditation, stressing that is is an exercise which it is necessary to practice constantly in order to discriminate between the Real and the unreal, for we must always hold our attention fixed upon the Eternal and the Real.

The "I" is a Real Principle which abides without change. It is the Witness of all that happens. This is so during the time of childhood, of young manhood or girlhood, that of the adult or the old man. Changes are outside of the "I."

Consciousness of the "I" never passes away. We are not capable of imagining its youth or its old age. Consciousness of the

"I" remains always shining. This is my "I." In the same way, the light remains without change. But in ordinary life I do not understand that which is my true "I"; I do not grasp it when knowledge is veiled by egoism.

Samkarāchārya declares that knowledge of BRAHMAN is the "end" (objective) of our life. This knowledge has the nature of happiness; with this, all our miseries disappear and we attain a state of freedom from desire. The Hindu sages speak often of this state; Buddha taught it under the name of "Tanhā" in Pali; in Sanskrit it is "Trishna."

This state appears incomprehensible to our ordinary life-consciousness, which is habitually dominated by our desires. It seems to us that we could not live without desires. But it is said, "Unfortunately, as long as 'Tanhā' is not there, there is a sense of want within you. When you arrive at the end of your searching, you will realize in BRAHMAN your true Self." BRAHMAN is above all wants.

The *Bhagavad-Gītā*, which we read every day, expresses it in these terms:

> *He who remains immovable in the midst of desires, as the ocean remains calm when rivers empty themselves into its bosom, such a one obtains peace, but not he who has desire for desires.*

This is a description. Desire expresses in a certain manner a lack of something. But when our soul arrives at knowledge of its true nature, it finds the infinitude which the Bhagavad-Gītā compares to the ocean. It is a question of the infinite ocean into which enter all desires without being able to trouble it, for nothing is lacking. Man, having arrived at this state of perfection, called, according to Vedanta, "Apta-kāma"—who has all his desires satis-

fied—desires nothing more. This is our ideal. The Upanishads say that this man is like fire. The consumed wood has neither smoke nor flame.

A liberated man has no longer need for anything in this world nor in any other world. Samkarāchārya explains also that "Moksha" is not the product of our efforts.

In general, we believe that we must do many things; we should meditate, perform rituals, attend worship, repeat the names of the Lord. Perhaps you will find it surprising that "Moksha" cannot be attained by our efforts?

Samkarāchārya has tried to explain this by logic. You are always free! Liberation is not a state obtained by your efforts. This state is always there. Only you do not know it.

Liberation is not a recompense for your efforts. The Lord does not give salvation. You are already saved!

The text called *Ashtāvakra Samhita* recounts a conversation between the great sage, Ashtavakra, and a king, Janaka. Upon the arrival of the sage, the king says to him, "Lord! Teach me how I may attain the state of liberation." The sage answers him, "You seek liberation? You are already free. Only this is still hidden from your vision. When the barriers to your vision are removed, the Atman in you will sense immediately its liberty."

The Atman abides without change; it remains where it is, who it is, who it was before, who it will be in the future.

To this is added the question of immortality. Religions speak always of eternal life, that is to say, of immortality. This question does not arise for the one who knows the Atman. No Atman is born; for it there is no death; it is eternal. He who knows the Atman will

sense immediately that he is not mortal. The Atman is the fundamental principle of all things. When a man realizes this state, he will have peace. The world is not capable of giving us this state, nor of taking it away from us. This state of liberation is the only supreme happiness.

Samkarāchārya explains what is to be understood by "Moksha." It is the Absolute, immutable, eternal, penetrating all things as the ether, devoid of all modification, eternally satisfied, without division, luminous in its own being, without either merit or demerit. That is to say, that sins and their fruits cannot approach It; at the same time, the division called past, present, and future cannot touch It. It is this that is non-embodiment, that is liberation.

Your identification with your body will completely disappear when you understand. Your consciousness will become greater than this limited consciousness, conditioned to this being to which we have given a human name. Thus "Moksha" is not produced by our actions. As soon as this knowledge comes to us, it removes our ignorance which is the great barrier hindering us from seeing and knowing that we are already liberated.

Samkarāchārya insists on the fact that "Moksha" is not the result of our actions; it is within each being. And each being is always, constantly, eternally free!

This is explained by two examples:

If gold is covered with impurities, we do not see the brilliance of the pure metal; when the impurities are removed, we see the brilliance of the gold. We do not give brilliance to the gold by our efforts. It was there.

Another example: When the sun has set, if there are no

clouds, we see the stars. The stars are always there, but because of the sun which blinds us, we do not see them.

Samkarāchārya adds: "You are always free! Atman is always there. You do not understand it because of the barriers of your ignorance. If man suffers in this world, this suffering is produced by himself. This is too bad. We seek heaven and happiness everywhere; we seek glory, we seek peace. We seek this state, incomprehensible to our reason, when all of this is with us and does not proceed from things outside of us.

"Remember," says he, "the example given in the *Chāndogya Upanishad:* 'A man searches for a treasure without; he does not know that this treasure is under his feet in the house he lives in.'"

Liberation or salvation is not that which will come. Heaven is not a state to be experienced beyond the earth. Heaven is not outside of us, but within us here, on earth. Heaven is not beyond that which we can see. Salvation is not to be imagined in the future as a continuation of life after having left this gross body; it is the discovery, right here, of the identity of our own "Self" with the ultimate Reality.

"Moksha" is not the destruction of "Self." People are sometimes afraid of Vedanta because they think that "I," the "individuality," will perish, and they don't like to perish; they would like to keep their individuality. Samkarāchārya explained that it is not a question of destruction of "Self"; only consciousness of ourself will become greater.

Can we say that we would not wish to become greater? We cannot, for instinct urges us to grow. We do not wish to live always as a child. Our consciousness seeks growth, and that is the reason we are always searching: We are not satisfied with a limited life. But the limitation will last as long as we have not attained the infinite Consciousness which is our true nature.

This idea arises from the Upanishads. And this is how Samkarāchārya explains Vedanta. The expansion of our consciousness arrives at the realization of absolute Infinitude. If you have a particular idea of salvation, Samkarāchārya affirms that you will realize it here, in your human body, in the state of "Liberated Living."

The Master of the Advaïta-Vedanta gives us the assurance of liberation in this very world, because the true nature, Atman, is beatitude.

The Upanishads say, This is hidden from man by his ignorance. It is ignorance which brings all our miseries. What is this ignorance?

I must explain it clearly, for we must achieve the perception in order to understand the idea of Samkarāchārya. He said: Ignorance is responsible for multiplicity, for the plurality which you see around you.

In truth, all is One. Of this, there is no doubt. As soon as you see two, you are in the ordinary vision of the world; ignorance has already veiled your consciousness. This ignorance brings in us the idea of plurality, of multiplicity, of me and you, of each one of us with a name and a form, with a particular nature; of trees, animals, innumerable distinctions. And then we no longer see the relationship between you and me, between you and the other objects around me. I no longer see the relationship by which we are all united. We are all *One*. Because of ignorance, I no longer understand this Unity.

Samkarāchārya explains that this ignorance is not objective; it is subjective for each one. For example: two people walk in the desert. Suddenly they see a great lake, trees, water, all that is enchanting under the burning sun. One of them thinks he will be able

to get water. The other, more experienced, knows that this landscape is a mirage. Both have seen the same landscape. The reaction of one comes from his ignorance, that of the other from his knowledge. Thus, Samkarāchārya concludes: "Your ignorance may be removed, but that does not mean that it will be for everyone."

Vedanta is a discernment by which we have a new vision of the world. Life is a series of experiences, but as soon as our ignorance is removed, we grasp the Unity which joins all together, the distinctions between different persons change in appearance.

At this moment we realize an inexpressible Peace!

The great prophets had this experience. The Lord Jesus spoke of the inexpressible Peace—and certainly after He had experienced it. This Peace changes our life and renders it excessively simple, without misery, even when corporeal life seems to be in danger.

Thus "Moksha," according to Samkarāchārya, is knowledge of the identity, ATMAN-BRAHMAN. For the liberated one, distinctions disappear between souls, men, the objects around us and, even the idea of the Lord Iswara. All disappears. Alone BRAHMAN exists.

All the "Samsaras" of worldly life fade away; in the same way, the false idea of a serpent seen in a rope disappears when we know that it is a rope; even as the fantasy of dreams is effaced when we awaken.

The vision of the world changes completely in the eyes of him who has realized ATMAN-BRAHMAN. This cannot be explained, says Samkarāchārya, because you yourself must have this experience in order to grasp the revelation of it. You yourself must see the light in order to understand; otherwise, fear remains with-

in you. You yourself must conclude: This was a projection of my ignorance. Therefore, I suffered.

It is, then, possible to have the experience which will bring you directly intuitive knowledge.

There is still another idea. The *Māndukya Upanishad* speaks of TURĪYA. This state is not like the three others: waking, dreaming, and deep sleep, which are divided, one from another. I do not dream at the same time that I am in deep sleep and I am not in deep sleep at the same time that I am awake. This is not the case with TURĪYA, which is always present. This state exists within us constantly and without change.

The Upanishads say: TURĪYA is always there, it is the state within which all experience rests; it is the basis of our true "I." It is BRAHMAN. TURĪYA is not a state distinct from others; it is the state in which the three others are included. At the same time it transcends them.

Samkarāchārya gave an exposition of his whole philosophy in *Vivekachūdāmani*, The Crest-Jewel of Discrimination. What is important is constant discrimination between the Real and the unreal. That which never changes is the Real. That which can be modified is unreal.

Vedanta can appear hard or at times disagreeable to those who lead a small life, attached to material things and to persons they call their own. Vedanta says to put that all aside. And this may seem very shocking to us. But Samkarāchārya was obliged to speak the truth:

"If you seek Reality, my dear friend, all is there and it is all. There is no other means of knowing it. You cannot accept, at the same time, ignorance and knowledge. If you wish to live in

ignorance, you may do so. But if you understand that it is not an ideal, then you must change."

There is still another point: the adoration of God. Samkarāchārya seems not to speak of God. But he makes the distinction between two levels of consciousness: that of ordinary life and that of the supreme Consciousness. At the level of ordinary life you remain as long as you consider yourself as yourself with a name, with a personality, with nature; at this level, you adore God. That is quite all right.

But pay attention! God whom you adore is not an imagination, He is BRAHMAN itself, considered with the attributes that you love. God is good, powerful, full of love. He is the Creator, He is not disproved by any divine qualification. You may adore God. This is good. What will happen for you? As the Bhagavad-Gītā says, you will go to God. "Those who adore Me, come to Me."

If you seek Truth, you must realize that you are the substance. There is nothing other. You must realize this. You will have liberation. Samkarāchārya brought the message of the Upanishads by explaining salvation according to the pure Vedanta which is satisfying to the reason.

Hinduism depends on the Scriptures and, today again, on the Upanishads of which Samkarāchārya was the great commentator. Curiously, the Upanishads sometimes leave questions unanswered. This is because it concerns that which cannot be explained or expressed. For us, that is incomprehensible which does not satisfy the five factors: time, causality, and the three dimensions of space.

But Samkarāchārya says: You will have an experience and you will be convinced of the possibility of realizing that you are BRAHMAN! "I am Atman! Aham Brahmāsmi!"

Om!
Lead us from the unreal to the Real!
From the shadows to the Light!
From death to Immortality!
Peace! Peace! Peace!

—*Translated from the French by*
Mrs. Samuel Chamberlain.

There's a large cloud in the sky. I can't see through it. But behind that cloud the sky's clear and blue. When the cloud melts away, I'll be able to see way out yonder. Not over the horizon (only God sees that far). But way out.

— *Alice Arnold*

INDEBTEDNESS

Francis Merchant

We have been made profoundly aware of the general problem of indebtedness by black people who have demanded five hundred million dollars for the sufferings they have endured.

We should indeed pay attention to such a claim, but there is a larger aspect to the issue that ought not be overlooked.

If we wish to speak about debts, let us consider the broader record of what we owe.

How much should we pay to the inventors who gave us the gift of language, the alphabet, the wheel, the electric light, the dynamo?

How much do we owe to the poets, the artists, the musicians, the philosophers?

How greatly are we indebted to the prophets, the teachers, the sages who have left their spiritual testaments as a legacy to the human race? What mone-

tary value can we place on the scriptures of the world?

How much can we pay for the sacrificial and redemptive life of Jesus Christ? Or for the rich wisdom of the Buddha?

How much do we owe those who gave their lives on the field of battle in order that it might be possible for us to profit by their sacrifices?

How much shall we pay for the gift of time, conferred upon us by the powers that be so that we might gain understanding and wisdom? Or for the gift of life itself which affords the possibility of impressing the divine image upon the human? Or for the spark of intelligence which we have the power to blow into flame?

How shall we estimate our debt to the invisible powers that established the foundations of the earth and provide us with light, air, space, and stars?

Can we ever count the multitude of our debts? Can we ever pay back the vast sums we owe to the living and to the dead?

Every son of earth bears on his shoulders a burden of debt that he can never pay. Only thankfulness and gratitude are befitting human beings as they contemplate the gap between what they have received from Life and what they have given to it.

In humility, may we bow before the Powers of Light and justly say, "Thine is the bounty; ours, the debt."

SAW YOU THIS WOMAN?

Ronn Spargur

Saw you this girl-child
with young, round breasts
pointing innocently
toward the world,
a golden vessel
filled with milk and honey?

Saw you this woman-mother,
full hipped,
misted with love
not yet felt or tasted,
a crystal shade
wanting to be raised?

Saw you this lover-mistress
with red, sweet lips
and white teeth laughing
at an apple, nipping an ear,
a child of light and passion
waiting to be kissed?

Saw you this child,
this woman,
this mother, mistress, mate?

She is Eve.

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UNITY OBSERVES 80TH ANNIVERSARY

Unity—the worldwide movement that emphasizes the worth of individuals and the power of prayer—will celebrate its 80th anniversary on August 21.

Ceremonies will be held at its headquarters in Lee's Summit, Missouri. Senator Stuart Symington of Missouri will be the chief speaker. Also present, of course, will be Unity's 89-year-old president, Lowell Fillmore, son of founder Charles Fillmore. Lowell went to work for his father upon graduation from high school, performing tasks that now require whole departments of employees to handle.

Unity's activities today reach into radio, publications (of which the monthly "Unity" and "Weekly Unity" and "Daily Word" are the best known), and numerous study centers. All are essentially instruments to convey Unity's faith in the power of prayer.

Ecumenical and not at all doctrinaire, Unity has always respected genuine striving after truth in whatever form or creed it might take. This is, no doubt, the reason why the most fundamental work of the movement is Silent Unity, a prayer vigil that has gone on without letup for 70 years. Silent Unity receives over 2800 phone calls for help every week; all are answered.

According to Charles Lelly, member of Unity's executive committee who years ago was assigned to the answering of such calls, it could be an exhausting experience for a novice. Along with the phone calls, moreover, come more than a million letters a year; and they, too, are answered.

Fellowship in Prayer is proud of the success of its elder brother and wishes it many years more in its extraordinary work.

NOTICES and COMMENTS

FIP TO CELEBRATE 20th BIRTHDAY. Plans are now being made for Fellowship in Prayer's twentieth anniversary, which falls on December 12. A special issue of this publication is definitely scheduled. Other observances will be announced in the October issue. Whatever they are, they will be tied in with the Board of Trustees' decision to make the occasion the beginning of a vigorous effort to expand—expand our membership, expand the circulation of this publication, expand financial support of our work, expand public awareness of our purpose.

NEW TRUSTEE ELECTED. At a July meeting of the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees of Fellowship in Prayer, Dr. Francis Merchant was unanimously elected Trustee. A member of the Fellowship since 1959 and a longtime contributor to this publication, Dr. Merchant is head of the humanities division of Piedmont College in Demorest, Georgia. He received his B.S. from Brooklyn College, his M.A. from the City College of New York, his Ph.D. from New York University. Teaching assignments have taken him to Texas, Louisiana, Nebraska, North Carolina, New Mexico, Wisconsin, and Georgia. World religions and occult studies have occupied much of his time. In *The Golden Hoard* he sought, he says, "to present a general synthesis of world religious teachings." His writings are diverse, however, and include several books of poetry, a study of the Irish poet-economist AE, a study in psychology entitled *A Search for Identity*, and *The Delightful Art of Writing*.

NEW ADVISOR. Mrs. Malvin B. Wallace, of Merion, Pennsylvania, has accepted our invitation to become an Eastern Zone advisor. Born in Virginia, raised in western Pennsylvania, she has long been active in the Overbrook Presbyterian Church, the Merion Civic Association, of which she is secretary, and the Girl Scouts, which

she served as Philadelphia president for many years. She is also an enthusiastic gardener. She is the mother of two sons, one of whom is a FIP Vice President and former Editor Paul Griffith.

ADVISOR RECOVERING. FIP is happy to report that Eastern Zone Advisor Rhoda Hung (wife of William Hung, President Emeritus of the Fellowship) is at home and recuperating nicely from eye surgery performed at the New England Deaconess Hospital in Boston. Our best wishes go to her for a complete recovery.

Our sympathy goes out to Dr. Hung for the loss of his brother David, long a member of the Fellowship.

PRAYERS FOR SPECIAL NEEDS. On 3 April 1969 Margaret (Mrs. Raymond) Weimer, Newark, Delaware, an active member of the Fellowship since 1961, was driving only 200 feet from her home when "the brakes did not hold," and her car struck three trees. The accident caused a broken neck, severe spinal injuries, and paralysis from the neck down, and for 23 days Mrs. Weimer fought for her life. Then slowly came "some encouraging signs," including "slight movement of her right arm and leg" and "a desire to wear a little color." Executive Secretary Kathryn G. Brown asked members of the Fellowship and other prayer groups in three countries to pray for Margaret, and the response was gratifying, with many cards and messages going to her at the Wilmington (Delaware) Medical Center. Mr. Weimer wrote recently: "Prayers are helping! Yesterday the doctor was very pleased with Margaret's progress. (This was the first such statement he had made. . .) The future forecast: out of the hospital sometime in July and then to the Dupont Institute for about six months of full-time therapy." As a channel for those in special need, we urge your continued prayers for Margaret Weimer.

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PRAYER

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love. Where there is despair, hope. Where there is darkness, light. Where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood, as to understand; to be loved, as to love; for it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.

—*St. Francis of Assisi*

"For a world united in prayer"

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